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# NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

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**ART. I.**—*Memorie storiche sugli studj e sulle produzioni del dottore G. Bernardo de Rossi, Prof. di Ling. Orient. da lui distese.*—*Historical memoirs of the studies and productions of Dr. John Bernard de Rossi, Professor of the Oriental Languages ; written by himself.* Parma, dalla stamperia imperiale. 8vo. pp. 112, 1809.

THE name of the subject of these memoirs is familiar to many of our readers, in connexion with his great work on the various readings of the Hebrew Old Testament. Though that collection exhibit but a small part of his vast and various erudition, it is almost the only one of his works, which has been considerably known either in England or America. As scarce any reading is more amusing than biography, so no branch of mere subsidiary reading is more useful to the scholar, than accounts of the lives and studies of those whom he chooses for the guides or standards of his pursuits. We feel curious to know how these great men lived and laboured, almost hoping that when we have imitated the form of their rooms, the arrangement of their books, and the filing of their papers, we are in the fair road to partake their fame. And if this be derided as a literary weakness, it will not therefore be denied that occasional hints are derived from the memoirs of learned men, which render real and valuable aid, in forming

our own habits of study and systematizing our own labours. Genius, it is true, breaks through all these rules, derides all these aids, and works and shines, in despite alike of what would promise to aid or to oppose it. But as we presume the prisoner innocent till found guilty, we can think of no maxim in education more important, than for the scholar to presume himself no genius, till he has fairly proved that he is one. The sure path to learning and fame is best found out, by looking into the lives of those who have travelled it farthest.

We are the more anxious to make these trite remarks, not only as the work before us is an uncommon instance of the union of high natural gifts, with inexhaustible perseverance in labour; but because the spirit of our country seems to run rather in favour of an opposite course. Our institutions and the state of our country breathe a spirit of independence, which cannot safely be transferred from the open bustling forum, to the study. Our civil and political freedom gives us no immunities from those intellectual laws, which have made great efforts necessary to great attainments. The forefathers and the heroes have done nothing to emancipate us from the burden of three centuries and a half of book-making; and not a constitution or charter from Maine to Florida has unlocked one of the dead languages, in which the wisdom of ages lies hid. All we can do—and it is this for which some of the Cleons of the day seem striving—is to withdraw ourselves from the great literary games of the nations; to affect to disdain any share in the competition or regard for the prize. Farther than this we cannot go. Would we rank on the list of their scholars we must labour and study, as they have laboured and studied before us; nor hope in the newest and freest state of the West to take so much as a single step by force of genius, which has been taken in the old world by dint of labour.

The work we have before us contains the life of a scholar of great native powers and unwearied application, and we proceed without apology to make an abstract from it for the edification of our readers, in the hope that though its immediate interest be confined to those engaged in pursuits similar to his, it will have some attraction for all who honour the literary life and are inspired with literary enthusiasm.

John Bernard de Rossi was born in Piedmont, October 25, 1742, of a respectable family, which had received at various

times several marks of the favour of the dukes of Savoy. After the first school education at Bairo, he went, at the age of 14, to Ivrea, where, to use the phrase of the French and Italian schools, he made his grammar, humanities, and rhetoric. At this early age, he gave an indication of his future zeal, as a writer, by extracting from the Latin Classics, which he studied, and the philosophy he read, the striking maxims and fine moral passages they contained, and forming of these a compendium. ‘This,’ says he, ‘was the commencement of two practices, which I ever afterwards observed; one to read no book, without making a note of the remarkable things it contained; and another to form, upon the maxims thus collected, as far as they accord with religion, my own character and conduct.’ While at Ivrea, he determined on embracing the ecclesiastical profession, and commenced the study of theology. He also amused himself in making sundials horizontal and vertical at all declinations, and figures in relief, which he afterwards coloured. ‘While at Ivrea,’ also continues Professor de Rossi, ‘I had the fancy to take lessons in drawing of the Canon Stephen Peronetti, an excellent painter, who had studied in Rome. The great progress I made, in the four months that I attended to it, and the many performances, which I have in part preserved, are proofs of the happy turn I had by nature for the arts.’

Desirous of taking his theological degrees, he repaired to Turin at the age of 20, and in the following year was admitted to the first of them. The king of Sardinia, Victor, having wisely made it the duty of all candidates for the theological degrees, to study the Hebrew language, de Rossi devoted himself to it, and with such zeal, that he was in the space of a few months in a condition to compose and to translate in this language, of which he failed not to give many proofs; such as an *epistle* and a *prose canticle*, addressed to his professor, the *speech of Esther*, translated from the Vulgate into Hebrew, and many parts of the Hebrew translated into Italian. Extending his attention from the ancient to the modern poesy of the Jews, he applied himself so diligently to the latter, that at the end of the sixth month, he composed and published a poem in a new and most difficult metre, addressed to Monsignor Rorà, newly made bishop of Ivrea. This rapidity of acquisition, as de Rossi himself remarks, attracted no small notice, and among others that of the Jews, and upon

occasion of this remark he gives us an anecdote of his early zeal in applying his learning to the defence of his faith. ‘An individual of this nation, whom I met accidentally at a bookseller’s, after having asked me if I could read Hebrew, gave me, as a trial, the celebrated verse in Deuteronomy, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord:’ repeating as I read it, that it was *echad, one*. True, answered I, perceiving his malice, and the unity of God is a fundamental article of christianity. But why is the name of God *thrice* repeated? He being unable to answer, I took this occasion to show him how, in this very verse, by which he thought to impugn it, that mystery was shadowed out.’ Encouraged by ‘these glorious beginnings,’ de Rossi continued his oriental studies, and in the two years before his second degree, devoted himself to the Hebrew without points, the Rabbinical, the Chaldee, the Syriac, the Samaritan, and the Arabic: all which he studied by himself; and submitted only to the professor, out of respect to him, the exercises in Hebrew and Rabbinic. He appeals to a *collection of Rabbinical texts*,—a *compendium of sentences*, extracted from that of Plantavizio,—a part of the *sacred hymns of Machazor*, translated by himself,—and *Syriac and Latin extracts from St. Ephrem*, all printed in 1765 (at the age of 23) as proofs of his rapid progress. In the same year, he employed himself on a rare and unpublished work of Caspi, existing in manuscript in the royal library, which he copied and translated in great part, as a specimen. This he dedicated to the first president, and with it a Syriac poem of his own, in the Jacobitic measure. Three years after, and at the age of 26, he published his *Oriental Poems*, written, in the languages already mentioned, with an introduction in Coptic, and a short Ethiopic elogium. A short time only passed, before Rorà, the bishop of Ivrea, was made archbishop of Turin. On this occasion, our indefatigable linguist composed two poems, one in *Estranghelo-Syriac*, expressing the sorrow of the church, which had lost a bishop, and the other a Polyglot poem, expressing the joy of the church, which had gained an archbishop. These poems were printed in the year 1768; and in the vacations of the same year, de Rossi commenced two great works: one *De Studio legis seu Biblico, ex rabbinorum præceptis optime instituendo*, compiled in a good degree from the *Mahasse Efod* of Peripot Duran, and illustrated ‘by an infinity of authors of all languages and nations,

among which was the *Enchiridion Studiosi* of the Arabian Borhaneddino.' The other work had its origin in the objections made by his fellow students, to the utility and necessity of the study of Hebrew. He thought it his duty to refute their objections, in a work which he called '*De præcipuis causis ac momentis neglectæ Hebraicarum literarum disciplinæ dissertatio elenctica*,' in which work he discusses, in twelve chapters, the same number of objections to the study of the Hebrew. It is worthy of remark, in a young catholic priest, that one of the objections refuted is, 'that the use of the vulgate renders that of the text useless.' One would suppose that these works and studies would have furnished at least full employment for a man of 27. But we are informed, that he found the means to learn, at the same time, the French, the Spanish, the English, the German, and Russian languages; making of the three last small grammars of his own to facilitate the acquisition. The two works mentioned were so far from engrossing the attention of this great man, that besides a compendium in Hebrew and Italian, he had composed seven other works on subjects connected with Hebrew and Rabbinical literature, which are all mentioned in the preface to the compendium. It does not appear that they were printed. While a list equally long, of works planned and partly composed, leaves one at a loss to conceive how he was thus able, in a few years, to bring to pass the productions of a life.

The early merit of de Rossi was perceived, and in this same year, so fruitful of his works, he was appointed to a post in the Royal library. Few months, however, elapsed, before he received the still more honourable call of the duke of Parma, to the chair of the oriental languages, in the University in that city. The letter of invitation was accompanied with an order of the minister to prepare some oriental poems, for the impending nuptials of his new master; which, with exemplary promptitude, he did before leaving Turin. A severe illness, which threatened his life, and left a weakness from which he has never recovered, cast a shadow over the pleasing prospects, that were opening on the professor. The first moments of recovery were devoted to study, and the fruit was a *Dissertation on the epoch of the first origin and variety of languages*, against Vitringa. This was followed by three other dissertations *on the native language of Christ and the Jews of Palestine*, against Diodati, who had published a work of

great learning and acuteness, *de Christo græcè loquente*. While these works were in a course of composition, Professor de Rossi prepared manuals and text books for his various lectures, and divided his course of Hebrew instruction into three years, which the students of theology were obliged to attend. At the close of the year 1772, he published a *confutation of the vain expectation of the Jews of their king Messiah, from the fulness of all the periods*. Professor de Rossi remarks of this work, ‘I treated these arguments, very convincing as they are, and not hitherto separately discussed, in a new order, and with a new and rare erudition, the fruit of long and laborious reading of the Jewish writers.’

In the following year, 1774, Professor de Rossi took occasion of the baptism of the newborn prince, to compose twenty inscriptions in as many different languages, celebrating this event. These were printed with the newly cast types of the celebrated Bodoni, also a Piedmontese, whom the duke’s liberality had drawn to Parma, and who, after signalling himself throughout Europe, for the splendor and correctness of his typography, died about four years ago. The twenty languages, in which Professor de Rossi composed the baptismal inscriptions for the prince, were the Hebrew without points, the Hellenistic,\* the Rabbinic, the Syriac, the Chaldee, the Palmyrene, the Turkish, the Hebrew with points, the Coptic, the Estranghelo-Syriac, the Samaritan, the Arabic, the Phenician, the Persian, the Greek, the German, the Egyptian, the Armenian, the Etruscan, the Carthaginian, and the Latin. At the same time he attempted to decipher a Phenician inscription, which had been lately discovered at Cagliari; and to illustrate a Saracenic distich of Theodosius the deacon: the former in an Italian letter, published in the *Efemeridi di Roma* of the year 1774, and the other in a Latin one, printed in the last volume of the *Storia Byzantina* in the same city.

\* By Hellenistic, we understand our author to mean here the Alexandrian dialect of the Greek. It means properly that form of the Greek language, which arose out of the Attic dialect, purified of its most marked peculiarities: the court language as it were of Greece, after the age of criticism had succeeded to the age of invention. See Buttmann’s *Greek Grammar* § 8, and Matthiæ’s *Greek Grammar* § 7; where there is an unsuccessful attempt of the editor of the English translation to correct the statement in the original. The modern Greek authors understand by Hellenistic the ancient Greek, in distinction from the Romaic,

The following year, 1775, brought forth a still more magnificent collection of Polyglot inscriptions, upon occasion of the marriage of prince Emmanuel of Piedmont, with a French princess. Twenty four of the most conspicuous cities of Piedmont were introduced, saluting the royal pair in twenty four addresses, in as many different languages, all in different characters, of the Bodoni foundery, and adorned with emblematical engravings, relative to the cities respectively, by the first Italian artists. Besides the languages in the former collection, there were introduced in this, the Ethiopic, the Jewish-German, the Gothic, the Russian, the Tibetan, the Illyrian in the hieronymian character, the Sanscrit, the Illyrian or Cyrillic-Sclavonian, and finally the Georgian. ‘Of these languages,’ says Professor de Rossi, ‘there were several—particularly of the Asiatic—which are very abstruse and hard. This could not but make the undertaking for a single person, and him a European, extremely arduous; and even hazardous, inasmuch as whenever at Rome and elsewhere, there is a proposal of similar Polyglot productions, though of much less extent than this, many learned men and the natives, best acquainted with their respective tongues which can be found, are employed in composing them.’ After having finished this splendid work, and published a defence of the one above mentioned, on the Vain Expectation of the Jews, Professor de Rossi turned his attention to the subject of Hebrew bibliography. From the mass of editions of the fifteenth century and of materials relative to the subject, which he had been long collecting, he published, the following year, his work *de Hebraicæ typographiæ Origine et Primitiis*, which was received by the learned with great applause, and two years after reprinted in Germany. He afterwards pursued this subject much farther, and after a lapse of twenty years, published his *Annali Ebreo typografici* del sec. xv.

Two years after the first mentioned work, appeared a specimen of the Syro-Hexaplarian bible, from a very valuable manuscript in the Ambrosian library at Milan. This specimen contained only the first psalm, but this was given in the Hexaplar Syriac of the Ambrosian manuscript, in the common simplex (the peshito,) with their respective sources the Greek and Hebrew, and Latin translations of both. The Origenian Notes were added in the margin, and in the beginning was a diatribe on the rarity and value of this codex, and



the version it contains, and on the celebrated hexaplar codex of Masius, which was the first volume of this. This little specimen was very acceptable to the learned, and often reprinted in Germany. More luminous specimens of whole books, as Daniel and the Psalter, have since been given by Bugati, librarian of the Ambrosian.

We come now to the work, on which Professor de Rossi's fame chiefly rests, in the *Extra-Continental World*, viz. the collection of various readings of the Hebrew Old Testament. It is well known with what interest this subject of the various readings of the Old Testament was regarded, by the biblical critics of the last century. The success of the collations which had been made of the manuscripts of the New Testament, and the great light thrown upon the Greek Scriptures, by the labours of Mill and Wetstein, led scholars to look with eagerness to similar labours for the correction of the Hebrew text. It was doubtful how far the masoretic revision pervaded the existing Hebrew manuscripts—there was no positive reason for despairing of manuscripts, which should contain a text older than these diligent grammarians,—and there were strong hopes felt that families and classes would be discovered, in the written copies of the Hebrew Scriptures, similar to those, which have been traced in the manuscripts of the Greek Scriptures. It is well known to the biblical student, that these expectations have been disappointed. No ante-masoretic text has been discovered: and as the lawyers, who compiled the pandects of the civil law, have by the success of their labours occasioned the loss of the two thousand volumes of preceding jurists, which formed the basis of their labours; so the grammarians of Tiberias, whatever service they did the Hebrew text, have at least cost us all the means of correcting it, which a comparison of older manuscripts would have afforded. But to return to our author, Kennicott's collation of manuscripts of the Old Testament, which appeared about this time, served no other purpose, with Professor de Rossi, than to inspire him with the idea of attempting a more perfect one. He had already in his hands a good number of Hebrew manuscripts which had never been examined, and proposed to make a journey to Rome, and other parts of Italy, in the double purpose of augmenting the number of his manuscripts and editions, and collating manuscripts which had not been exam-

ined by Dr. Kennicott's agents. He succeeded in both, to his entire satisfaction. In one library, he discovered seventeen manuscripts of the Hebrew bible, which had escaped former collectors; and in Rome six entire libraries, which had not been entered in behalf of Kennicott. As an earnest of his discoveries, a small specimen of a very valuable codex, in the private library of Pope Pius V, with an appendix relative to the famous Barbarini tritapla Samaritan Codex, was published in Rome by Professor de Rossi in 1780, and reprinted the year after at Tübingen.

Returned to Parma, he yielded to the requests of two friends, in composing the history of Hebrew typography in Ferrara and Sabionetta, in two commentaries filled with curious erudition relative to the editions of Hebrew Scriptures, in these cities. They were speedily reprinted, with additions by the author, in Germany. These were followed by an appendix to Masch's edition of Lelong's *Bibliotheca*, in which account is given of various editions, which had escaped both Lelong and his editor Masch.

'These however,' says Professor de Rossi, 'were but small digressions; the main object of my labours was the great work of the Various Readings. I had, in the specimen of the Codex Pontificus just mentioned, announced my work, and promised that it should be more perfect, ample, and correct, than the English collection. I had moreover confuted a patriotic assertion of Kennicott, who boasts his country to be richer than all others in manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures; while Italy, nay a private Italian (himself), possessed a much larger number; and in point of editions possessed as many as five copies of an ancient and rare edition, of which Kennicott maintained the only copy extant to be in England.' Shortly after the appearance of the program, announcing the plan of this work, Professor de Rossi published his *Apparato Ebreo-biblico*, containing a description of his codices—and so advantageous were the opinions which were excited by it of the expected work, that an adequate number of subscribers was immediately obtained, and the first volume, containing the prolegomena, key to the codices, and three first books of the Pentateuch, appeared in 1784. Every one is acquainted with the merits of this work. The three other volumes followed in 1786, 1787 and 1788; and Professor de Rossi had, as he observes, the satisfaction to finish of himself in a little

less than four years, an undertaking which had occupied the English editor, with so many subsidies, twenty years.

We find but a few years repose, after the incredible labours of this work. In 1795, Professor de Rossi published the *Annali Ebreo-typografici* del sec. xv. mentioned above. This work, in three parts, treats first of editions with a date, second, of editions without a date, third, of false editions; the whole arranged in chronological order, and illustrated in an ample commentary. ‘Whoever,’ adds Professor de Rossi, ‘cherishes the opinion formerly universal, that the edition of Soncino was the first, will not read without surprise, in my dissertation, that there are twenty seven editions quoted there, anterior to the Soncino, and nearly all in my possession.’

After having published, in 1799, an appendix to the great work on the various readings, containing subsequent collections, Professor de Rossi pursued the subject of Hebrew bibliography, in a work, entitled *Annales Hebræo-typographici ab Anno 1501 ad 1540*. The editions described in this work are also very rare, printed for the most part in Constantinople and the Levant, and taken from manuscripts. Before commencing the work, he collected one hundred and fifty of these editions. In the following year, appeared *Bibliotheca giudaica Anticristiana*, containing an exact description of all the works of the Jews against Christianity: a performance rendered considerably interesting by the rarity of these books, and the jealousy of the Jews, with respect to this circulation. This performance was but the forerunner of another, of still more general interest, viz. the *Dizionario Storico degli Autori Ebrei*, in which all that is valuable in the large works of Wolf and Bartolucci is reduced into a convenient compass, innumerable omissions supplied, and errors corrected.

Professor de Rossi had been all his life collecting a library of manuscripts and rare editions, of which his works are at once the evidence and the fruit. Proposals from several princes—the king of Spain and the Pope—were made to him to dispose of it, but he had determined not to deprive himself of it, till he should have published a catalogue raisonné of its contents. This he finally accomplished in 1803, and the result of it is, that the library contained in the whole 1571 manuscripts, of which 1377 were Hebrew, and 194 in other oriental and European languages. More than 1070 are on parchment: a few hitherto unknown, unique, and original:

and several hundreds inedited. Of one of these, a penta-teuch, with the inedited commentary of R. Immanuel, a manuscript in five thick folios, we were told in the ducal library at Parma, that the Jews of Holland offered to buy it for its weight in gold. Among the other Hebrew manuscripts, was a large collection of manuscripts of the Karaite Jews, which furnished the materials to a work not yet published, by Professor de Rossi, called *Biblioteca Caraitica*,—from which much light might be expected to be thrown on this curious and little studied branch of judaic literature. There were several very valuable Latin classical manuscripts—one or two Greek evangelistaries of antiquity—a Dante written in the poet's life time, and several Petrarchs, one of which was the basis of the second Cominian edition. Since the publication of this catalogue, Professor de Rossi has acquired many manuscripts, among which are fifty two Hebrew ones. Among the inedited Rabbinical works, one of the most valuable was the Lexicon of Parchon, older than that of Kimchi, and of which Professor de Rossi had two copies. Extracting from this the most obscure and difficult words, he formed a small work, under the title of *Lexicon Hebraicum Selectum*, which was printed in 1805, and in the same year appeared a dissertation on the Koran published at Venice at the beginning of the sixteenth century, of which, as no copy is known to be extant of it, the existence had become problematical, Professor de Rossi, however, establishes the certainty of it. In the following year, 1806, appeared a specimen of the inedited commentary of R. Immanuel, mentioned above.

Anxious to render those services to the Arabian literature, which certainly, more than any other modern scholar, he had rendered to the Hebrew, Professor de Rossi composed and published, in 1807, a *Dizionario Storico degli Autori Arabi*, which should serve as a compendium, supplement, and correction of the larger works of D'Herbelot and others. Immediately after the publication of this work, appeared *Sinopsi delle Istituzioni ebraiche*, with a Hebrew anthology subjoined. Returned from a journey in Piedmont, undertaken after the appearance of these works, Professor de Rossi solaced the pains of a violent attack of the gout, by an Italian translation from the original of the Psalms. The translation was printed in 1808, and followed the same year, by the *Annals of Hebrew typography in Cremona*, written to oblige

a learned Cremonese friend, in which are described forty-two editions of the Hebrew Scriptures, published in that city. At the close of the year, appeared *Dizionario bibliografico dei librari Orientali*, an enumeration and description of the most rare and curious works in the Hebrew, Rabbinic, Chaldee, Syriac, Samaritan, and Arabic languages.

The following year, 1809, appeared the translation of Ecclesiastes into Italian, a work which was followed by a collection of impressive sentiments from the Psalms, both of which appear to have been undertaken by Professor de Rossi, with ascetic views; and for the relief they afforded to a mind fatigued with the vanities of life. In the same year, appeared the memoirs, of which the title is given at the head of this article, and from which its contents are derived. It is now nine years since the publication of this work. In this interval, Professor de Rossi has not yielded to the lassitude of age; and has furnished as memorable an exemplification, as we have ever met, of the Nil actum reputans, dum quid superesset agendum. In 1810, appeared from his pen an Essay on the origin of printing in engraved tablets, and on a xylographic edition hitherto unknown; in 1811, a Compendium of Sacred Criticism,—in 1815, an Introduction to the Study of Hebrew, and in 1817, an Introduction to the Sacred Scripture; while, as he informed us recently, he has now in the press a System of Hermeneutics.

Professor de Rossi is at present seventy six years old, and though not free from the weakness of age, still in full possession of all his faculties, and with an appearance and countenance far behind his years. The number of his printed works amounts to fifty one, and of works unpublished, commenced, and planned, eighty one. If some of those published be small, they are all such only as a man of consummate learning could produce, and a few seem of themselves a life's labour. Professor de Rossi has lived for letters, more exclusively than most scholars of the age, and without having reached any thing, that can be called dazzling as the recompense, has had the more solid reward of uniform success, respectability, and competence. His works have procured him pensions from his native, as well as his adopted sovereigns; and among so many and such various productions, there is not one, which has ever been accused of being superficial or inexact. The work before us, if less fruitful of inci-

dents, than some of the more tumultuous biographies, pleases one more by the invariable cheerfulness of the narration, the contentedness of disposition it displays, and the picture it presents of the attainment of the desired end, by the patient application of the regular means. There is not a sigh over the caprice of fortune, or the neglect of merit. Not a depreciating remark of a contemporary. If there be a little of the self-complacency of age, there is none of the moroseness nor the sadness; and surely a little self-complacency may be pardoned in one, who stands second to none of the age in his labours in the cause of learning and religion. One branch of the department of learning, to which he devoted himself, may be considered as nearly exhausted by the works he has published. Certainly no new collation of Hebrew manuscripts of the scriptures will be ever attempted, unless some accident, of which we have now no conception, should bring to light an ante-masoretic text. The pretensions to such a text, made by the late Dr. Buchanan and the editor of the fragment brought by him from the East, are on a par with the pretensions of the original Latin gospel of St. Mark, preserved at Venice. Of the Rabbins, we confess, we think more use might be made. Like the Greek scholiasts, they have been too much or too little consulted; and while one generation of critics, such as the Buxtorfian or the Danzian, has borrowed too blindly from them; it is perhaps an equal fault on the other side, that they have been treated with unmerited contempt.

We have taken the more pleasure in making this abstract from Professor de Rossi's Memoirs, for the proof it furnishes, that the catholic church is not wholly inattentive to those studies, which the protestants are apt to think are confined to themselves. Of the sacred critics living, few names will take precedence, in the estimation of posterity, of de Rossi at Parma, of Jahn at Vienna, or of Hug at Friburg; the two former, and we believe the latter, not only catholics, but priests. If to these be added Dr. Geddes, who belongs to this generation, there is certainly no branch of literature of the Old Testament, which will not owe nearly as much to catholics, as to protestants.

It is also pleasing to behold in Italy—almost the last land one would wish to see an ignorant land—bright examples still occurring of that noble φιλοπονία, which it is thought had almost wholly emigrated beyond the Alps. If this country, the native one of so many arts, had no other names to show

than those of Caluso of Turin, and Marini and Visconti of Rome, all deceased within a few years, the last within one and a half, of Mai at Milan, de Rossi at Parma, Morelli at Venice, and Mezzofante at Bologna, it might still claim for this generation an equal division of learned fame, with almost any of the past. One superiority they may perhaps be allowed to possess, over the mass of transalpine scholars, and it is surely that, which ought to be regarded with least jealousy, the writing of Latin. Not Gessner, nor even Ruhnken (whose Dutch abridgment of Scheller is the best manual Latin dictionary) have made Forcellini, who was thought to write Latin better than any man of his day, less acceptable; and even Foscolo, though a Greek by birth, amidst the distractions of a political and military life, in these revolutionary times, has entered into the varieties of the Latin language, with the delicacy of a native; leaving you at a loss in his *Didymus*, which most to wonder at, the exactness with which, in the work itself, he has caught the ungraceful but expressive rudeness of the vulgate; or the ease with which, in the preface, he passes from the elegant fluency of Cicero to the precision of Sallust.

The volume before us closes with a complete catalogue of the published and unpublished works of the author. Of these we are happy to learn that copies of the greater part have recently been imported for the university library at Cambridge.

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ART. II.—*Mississippian Scenery: a poem descriptive of the interior of North America.* By Charles Mead.

With contemplative solitude imprest  
I sing the shady regions of the West.

Philadelphia, Potter & Co. 12mo, pp. 113.

THE historians inform us that a remarkable change has taken place in the business of poetry and prose.\* Poetry is

\* Lest we should haply be accused of plagiarism for this sentiment, we think it safe, to set down the following verse:

There was ere prose began, they say, a time,  
Ere learned scribe with men had lot or part;  
But fact or fable, all was told in rhyme,  
And came unlearned and reached untaught the heart.  
'Twas *spirit* all—high nature did impart  
Her gift undelved for, wheresoe'er she chose;—  
At length the *letter* came, and with it art,  
The poet's race declined, the writer's rose,  
Till verse itself displays sad kindred oft with prose.